



**Directorate of
Intelligence**

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Science and Weapons Daily Review

**Thursday
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251

Page Denied

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25X1

CONTENTS

21 JUNE 1984

25X1

3 USSR: DEVELOPMENT OF METAL-MATRIX COMPOSITES

25X1

A recent Soviet press item states that the Physical-Technical Institute of the Belorussian Academy of Sciences has developed a continuous casting unit for obtaining aluminum-based composite materials; the development of the casting unit is a reflection of the Soviets' strong interest in metal-matrix composites.

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25X1

21 JUNE 1984
SW SWDR 84-120

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

SECRET



25X1

USSR: DEVELOPMENT OF METAL-MATRIX COMPOSITES



25X1

According to a recent item in the Soviet press, the Belorussian Academy of Sciences' Physical-Technical Institute has developed a continuous casting unit for obtaining aluminum-based composite materials.



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Comment:

Although many standard metals fabrication techniques can be applied to MMC, the fact that the Soviets have developed yet another--the casting unit--shows their continuing strong interest in MMC. The Soviets have a large metallurgical industry that can provide equipment and people trained in metallurgical techniques. By contrast, using organic composites requires retraining of people and the introduction of new equipment.

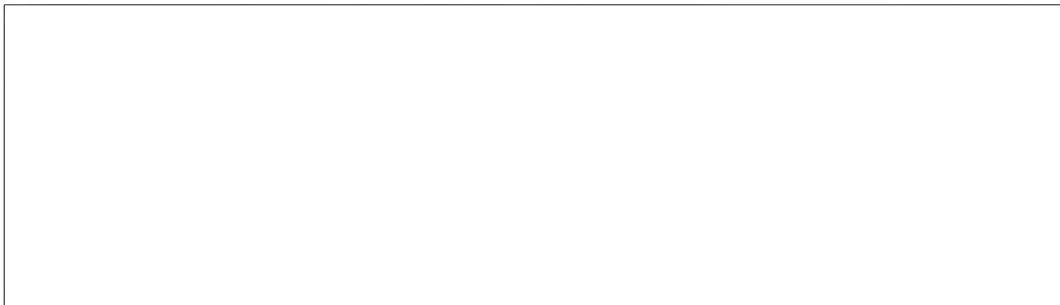


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MMCs also are of interest to the Soviets because of their inherent fatigue resistance, the conservation of materials that result from the improved composite properties, and the improvement in the high-temperature properties of the matrix metal. Despite the Soviet interest in MMC, no confirmed applications are known. According to Soviet scientists, the most researched MMC--boron-reinforced aluminum--has been used in aircraft fuselage ribs, stiffeners, and main beams. According to a Soviet researcher, however, these were only test pieces.



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